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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000222

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MZ](#)
SUBJECT: RENAMO LEADER DHLAKAMA'S POLITICAL ANALYSIS

REF: A. MAPUTO 166
[1](#)B. 07 MAPUTO 1344

Classified By: Pol-Econ Chief Matthew P.Roth, Reasons 1.4(b)&(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a March 7 meeting with the Charge, Afonso Dhlakama, leader of opposition party Renamo, said that Government bureaucracy and corruption were scaring off foreign investment. He expressed concern about the strength of election institutions while noting that he was traveling extensively throughout the country, presumably in a runup to the 2009 presidential elections. He lamented the lack of constructive dialogue between Frelimo and Renamo, and said the February riots over bus fare hikes reflect the people's increasing frustration with the Guebuza administration's lack of understanding of their plight. Dhlakama's performance is indicative of an increasingly sophisticated campaigner gearing up for elections. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the opposition party Renamo, met with the Charge, P/E Chief, and Poloff for lunch on March 7 at the EMR. Dhlakama was accompanied by Renamo Assembly Deputy Joao Alexandre, Renamo press spokesperson Fernando Mazanga, and senior aide Joaquim Marungo.

Corruption and Bureaucracy Scare Off Investment

[1](#)3. (C) The Charge asked for the Renamo leader's perspectives on the business environment in Mozambique. Dhlakama said that the 'Frelimo government' bureaucracy is overbearing and disorganized, suffocating investment, and called the bureaucracy a facade for organized corruption. He criticized the judiciary as especially weak, and said that land tenure law was in desperate need of reform while a labor law passed last November was but a marginal improvement over the previous one. Ultimately, he said, these factors are scaring off foreign investment to the detriment of the country.

Elections and Campaigning

[1](#)4. (C) The Charge noted upcoming elections, and the USG's interest in transparency and strengthening democratic institutions. He said the international community had watched with interest as Renamo and Frelimo leaders worked constructively together to reach an agreement to postpone local elections scheduled for late 2007 (ref a). Dhlakama responded that weak electoral institutions should be an area of great concern to the international community, buttressing his statement with the claim that he actually won the 1999 elections with 69 percent of the vote, only to have Frelimo disqualify enough ballots to change the outcome. He said Renamo definitely preferred having provincial and municipal elections held this year. He noted that Renamo currently controls the elected governments of five municipalities which he characterized as the best-run in the country. He asserted that Frelimo is afraid to allow municipal elections this year because they would lose to Renamo; and for the same reason Frelimo was afraid to allow additional municipalities to be created (note: there are only 33 formal municipalities in the country of 20 million people. End note.)

15. (C) Dhlakama said, with a smile, that he was not yet a candidate for president in the 2009 elections, pointing out that Renamo will nominate its candidate for President at its caucus in July. Nonetheless, he had spent the past 34 days in Mozambique, s central provinces visiting resettlement sites for flood victims and leading political party 'training.' He said that he would spend March in Maputo visiting southern provinces before heading to Sofala and other northern provinces for the month of April.

No Inter-Party Dialogue

15. (C) Sounding a theme from his last meeting with the Charge (ref b), Dhlakama lamented what he termed a total lack of interest in inter-party dialogue by the Guebuza government. He claimed that he has met with President Guebuza only three times since his inauguration, and that none of those meetings was substantive. Renamo Assembly Deputy Alexandre noted that such dialogue must begin at the highest levels; currently Frelimo members in the National Assembly serve only to defend Frelimo government initiatives and legislation at all costs, presumably on orders from within Frelimo, with no regard for what is in the best interests of the country.

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Recent Riots a Tide Change in Popular Politics?Q-----

16. (C) The Charge suggested that the February riots protesting bus fare hikes possibly portended a worrisome trend. Dhlakama responded that people on the street no longer have faith that democracy will bring about change in their lives and that the riots were a sign of 'maturity' in the sense that Mozambicans had seen the power of protest in other countries, were no longer afraid of their government, and were now ready to demand change. Dhlakama said that it was clear that Guebuza, s government--"a government that doesn't listen"--had been taken completely unaware by the ferocity of the protests--"even though it shouldn't have been." Dhlakama said he had publicly denounced the move to violence, but noted that he understood and supported the manifestation of the people's frustration.

Comment: An Increasingly Sophisticated Campaigner

17. (C) Animated and voluble, Dhlakama energetically conversed over a diverse range of topics for more than two hours at the lunch. Dhlakama's analysis of business, judicial and electoral institutions shows insight and perception of the country, s ills. Perhaps more interestingly, Dhlakama recently has showed an increasing amount of sophistication as a campaigner, as exemplified by his extended tours of the provinces and pithy sound bites made for media. He concluded the conversation lamenting that "while Africa is the continent rich with resources like oil and gold, it remains gravely poor in another resource even more important: great leaders." Clearly he still believes that he can fill that leadership gap in Mozambique.
Chapman